



Carla Borges

2017 Nuffield International Scholar
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I am a Brazilian grain farmer from Chapadao do Ceu in Goias State and my family also have farms in the State of Mato Grosso. I am currently working 650 km away from home, on a new farm in Agua Boa, in the State of Mato Grosso.

The CSC was great. There was lots of interesting topics and lots of interesting people with new information that will be very useful in my business. I am sure it will be very useful for the other countries as well.

What was a highlight?

It was a speech about communication. It opened my eyes about how we are communicating our farm image to society and the way we should do that to promote ourselves and to say we, as farmers, are doing good things for society not bad things.

How do you go about opening up land in a new area?

When I got back home after college in 2013 to work with my family at the farm, I felt the business was already too small and already organized for the whole family. I needed a challenge and wanted to make the business grow.

The region my family farms in the State of Mato Grosso do Sul is one of the most innovative and productive in Brazil, and also one of the most expensive land in Brazil. So we decided we would expand in a cheaper region where we would have to work the land from scratch. I started looking for farms in other regions and found a farm in the Araguaia Valley in the State of Mato Grosso, with very degraded pasture and very attractive price but with lots of work to do. I found my challenge.

The new farm is 8000 hectares with 20 per cent native vegetation that is committed as an environmental reserve. When we started, there was only 900 hectares ready for soybean planting. The first year we were cultivating about 2500 hectares and the second and third years about 3500 hectares. We are planning to open another 2000 hectares in the next two years. I brought a whole team from the old farm to start the operation – four family members and three single men who already knew the culture of our business. This helped a lot with our communication and the operations.

We built the farm from nothing, including houses, silos, machinery sheds, dining hall, drainage etc. We crop two times a year on this farm, producing mostly soybeans but also corn, rice, millet seeds and grass for seeds. We market the soybeans through traders and the other products through local buyers such as confinements (feedlots) and cattle ranchers.

The wet season rainfall between October and April ranges from 1700mm to 2200mm. The dry season – May to September – delivers no rain at all.

What opportunities are there for Nuffield in Brazil?

This was the first time that the CSC has been held in Brazil. Now Nuffield in Brazil has a great chance to grow. As Brazil is becoming a leader of agriculture in the world, then it is the perfect place for Nuffield to grow and spread knowledge.

Brazilians like to use innovative ideas to promote agriculture, just like Nuffield.

Any person who has a good idea should apply for a Nuffield Scholarship and help to promote this concept. We need more information and to spread knowledge around the world to achieve more unity within the farming community. It is essential to bring and implant relevant information in our country, such as innovative production methods, new products and markets, and new business models.

A Nuffield Scholarship is an intensive preparation for farmers and agri-professionals who are committed to life-long learning and to promoting excellence in all aspects of agricultural production, distribution, management and communication.